

ABC NIGHTLINE
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KOPPEL: All right. Gene Cernan, I, I'd like to take a look... And I'm not going to ask you to tell me, because you don't know either, what, what's gonna happen at the beginning of next year, but tell us something about the military applications of the space shuttle. What kinds of things is it capable of doing that is of use to the intelligence community and of use to the military community? CERNAN: Ted, I, ah, I'm not sure what's on that, ah, that shuttle flight next January either. We can only assume, perhaps, it's a, ah, it's a high-altitude recon satellite of some kind. The shuttle has demonstrated, obviously... We've talked about the commercial impact. I believe the private sector has to aid in the development of that commercial impact, ah, because of the high cost of getting into space. There's no question about that. But from the military point of view, I, I just don't believe now that we are demonstrating a capability that we have in this new environment that, that surrounds us, that we not only have access to, but we have capability within... I don't, I don't think we as a nation can, ah, can bury our heads in the sand and can ignore that. You know, the high ground is a, is a tremendous advantage point, ah, ah, for any nation at any time, and I think now that we have the, the capability to utilize that high ground, whether it's for surveillance, to know what's going on in some other part of the world for our own self-defense or our own strategic welfare, that we oughta certainly use that. The Air Force is gonna be developing a capability out of Vandenberg Air Force Base. I would venture to say that you and I will know less about those flights, ah, as time goes on, as we do about that flight in January.